



# Eczema. What can I do?

- **Moisturize!** Slathering on a gentle, fragrance free moisturizer is one of the best ways to naturally treat eczema. Healthy skin cells are plumped up with water, forming a protective barrier against damage and infection. Fats and oils in the skin help retain moisture, maintain body temperature and also prevent harmful substances or bacteria from entering our bodies. Eczema skin is less able to retain water. Moisture is then lost from the deeper layers of the skin, allowing bacteria or irritants to pass through more easily. To counter this moisturize your child's skin several times a day especially within minutes after bathing!
- **Avoid Irritants.** Eczema skin is more sensitive to perfumes, dyes, and chemicals in common household products. Switch to fragrance free products, detergents and avoid fabric softener and dryer sheets.
- **Minimize scratching:** To prevent your baby from worsening the rash with cuts and infection, keep nails clean, short (file jagged edges), and if needed, covered at nighttime with mittens.
- **Topical anti-inflammatory medications:** Eczema is a chronic inflammatory skin disease. Used properly, topical anti-inflammatory medications are effective for the treatment of eczema.
- **Bathtime:** Daily bathing is recommended for infants and children with eczema. Baths are generally preferred over showers. Baths should be warm, not hot, and they should be short in duration, lasting about 10 minutes. It is most important to moisturize the skin immediately after bathing (within 3 minutes) to prevent evaporation of moisture from the skin.
- **Test for Allergies:** Food allergy has been implicated in approximately one third of children with AD. Environmental allergies can also play a role. Skin testing is the MOST sensitive way of determining if a food is worsening your child's eczema. To safely perform skin testing for foods, make an appointment with an allergist.

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